

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

No claims are currently being added or canceled.

Claims 14 and 19-21 are currently being amended.

This amendment and reply amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 14, 17 and 19-27 are pending in this application.

Claim Objections:

In the Office Action, claims 14 and 19-21 were objected to, for the reasons set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. Claims 14 and 19-21 have been amended in accordance with the comments made in the Office Action with respect to the objection to these claims, whereby presently pending claims 14 and 19-21 are unobjectionable.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 14, 19-23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,023,506 to Ote in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,058,476 to Matsuzaki et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,903,647 to Ronning; claims 24, 28, 32 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ote as applied to claim 14, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,337,362 to Gormish; claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ote as applied to claim 14, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,024,500 to Ashizaki; and claims 25, 29, 33 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ote as applied to claim 14, and further in view of Gormish. These rejections are traversed with respect to the presently pending claims under rejection, for at least the reasons given below.

In its rejection of claim 14, the Office Action relies in part on column 6, lines 4-30 of Ote, which the Office Action asserts that it describes "...displays a list of encrypted files 1090 stored in the encrypted file area 1080 in the form of unencrypted file names". Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion. Namely, file name conversion means 1220 of Ote encrypts unencrypted files, whereby those encrypted files are then stored. Subsequently, when encrypted files are decrypted, the user does not recognize association relations between the unencrypted file and the encrypted file, so that the user cannot select files the user wants to decrypt.

Thus, in Ote, unencrypted file/encrypted file association table 1060 is created to display a list of unencrypted file names associated with encrypted file names at the time of decryption. Therefore, when the user selects the unencrypted files, the associated encrypted files can be unencrypted.

On the other hand, claim 14 recites that (1) a key value is set as an encryption key when the same encryption key is inputted a plurality of times, (2) after the input key value of M digits are divided and when the key value of the part of the N digits is inputted, the part of the key value of the N digits is converted to a form having no specific meaning.

From this, it is clear that the portion of Ote pointed out in the Office Action does not correspond to such components as recited in claim 14.

Still further, Figure 11 of Ote describes that a password is converted to an asterisk at the time of inputting the password or a password is "reinput". As shown in Figure 11 of Ote, the input key value is displayed by an asterisk from the beginning. This is much different from the features recited in claim 14, whereby Ote does not teach or suggest that when the key value of the part of the N digits is inputted, the part of the key value of the N digits is converted to a form having no specific meaning.

Moreover, Ote discloses that a password reinput is requested to confirm the password. On the contrary, claim 14 recites that the key is inputted a plurality of times to set an encryption key.

Claim 14 also recites that a key value can be displayed so as to be recognized until the key value of the N digits out of the key value of M digits is inputted, from the viewpoint of

avoiding erroneously inputting a key input of an encryption key and preventing furtive look of the key input of the encryption key by the third party. Thus, in the present invention according to claim 14, the above problem can be solved by converting the inputted portion to a form having no specific meaning after finishing inputting the key value of the N digits.

On the contrary, in Ote, an input key value is displayed by an asterisk from the beginning, which may result in inputting the encryption key erroneously.

Further, Matsuzaki describes an encryption device for data transfer between a transmitter and a receiver. Although Minagawa describes that data encryption and decryption is applicable to printers and a public key is used to encrypt print data, Minagawa does not teach or suggest a method of setting an encryption key. In addition, Ronning describes compressing and decompressing data. However, unlike the specific features recited in claim 14, Matsuzaki and Ronning neither describe nor suggest that (1) the key value is set as an encryption key when the same encryption key is inputted a plurality of times, (2) after the input key value of M digits are divided and when the key value of the part of the N digits is inputted, the part of the key value of the N digits is converted to a form having no specific meaning.

Therefore, independent claim 14 patentably distinguishes over the combined teachings of Ote, Matsuzaki et al. and Ronning.

Presently pending independent claims 19, 20, and 21 recite similar features to those discussed above with respect to claim 14, whereby those claims also patentably distinguish over the combined teachings of Ote, Matsuzaki et al. and Ronning.

It is noted that Gormish merely describes that parity bits are used to correct errors, whereby it does not rectify the above-mentioned deficiencies of Ote, Matsuzaki et al. and Ronning. It is also noted that Ashizaki describes that different types of print data can be printed by a printing unit, whereby it does not rectify the above-mentioned deficiencies of Ote, Matsuzaki et al. and Ronning.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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